NUMB. XXI.

# The SPECTATOR.

*——Locus eſt & pluribus Umbris.* Hor.

*Saturday, March* 24. 1711.

I Am ſometimes very much troubled, when I reflect upon the three great Profeſſions of Divinity, Law and Phyſick; how they are each of them over-burdened with Practitioners, and filled with Multitudes of Ingenious Gentlemen that ſtarve one another.

We may divde the Clergy into Generals, Field-Officers, and Subalterns. Among the firſt we may reckon Biſhops, Deans and Arch-Deacons. Among the ſecond are Doctors of Divinity, Prebendaries, and all that wear Scarfs. The reſt are comprehended under the Subalterns. As for the firſt Claſs, our Conſtitution preſerves it from any Redundancy of Incumbents, notwithſtanding Competitors are numberleſs. Upon a ſtrict Calculation, it is found that there has been a great Exceeding of late Years in the ſecond Diviſion, ſeveral Brevets having been granted for the converting of Subalterns into Scarf-Officers; inſomuch that within my Memory the price of Luteſtring is raiſed above two Pence in a Yard. As for the Subalterns, they are not to be numbred. Should our Clergy once enter into the corrupt Practice of the Laiety, by the ſplitting of their Free-holds, they would be able to carry moſt of the Elections in *England*.

The Body of the Law is no leſs encumbered with ſuperfluous Members, that are like *Virgil*'s Army, which he tells us was ſo crouded that many of them had not Room to uſe their Weapons. This prodigious Society of Men may be divided into the Litigious and Peaceable. Under the firſt are comprehended all thoſe who are carried down in Coach-fulls to *Weſtminſter-Hall*, every Morning in Term-time. *Martial*'s Deſcription of this Species of Lawyers is full of Humour:

*Iras & Verba locant.*

Men that hire out their Words and Anger; that are more or leſs paſſionate according as they are paid for it, and allow their Client a quantity of Wrath proportionable to the Fee which they receive from him. I muſt however obſerve to the Reader, that above three Parts of thoſe whom I reckon among the Litigious, are ſuch as are only quarrelſome in their Hearts, and have no Opportunity of ſhowing their Paſſion at the Bar. Nevertheleſs, as they do not know what Strifes may ariſe, they appear at the Hall every Day, that they may ſhow themſelves in a Readineſs to enter the Liſts, whenever there ſhall be Occaſion for them

The Peaceable Lawyers are, in the firſt place, many of the Benchers of the ſeveral Inns of Court, who ſeem to be the Dignitaries of the Law, and are endowed with thoſe Qualifications of Mind that accompliſh a Man rather for a Ruler, than a Pleader. Theſe Men live peaceably in their Habitations, Eating once a Day, and Dancing once a Year, for the Honour of their reſpective Societies.

Another numberleſs Branch of Peaceable Lawyers, are thoſe young Men who being placed at the Inns of Court in order to ſtudy the Laws of their Country, frequent the Play-Houſe more than *Weſtminſter-Hall*, and are ſeen in all publick Aſſemblies, except in a Court of Juſtice. I ſhall ſay nothing of thoſe Silent and Buſie Multitudes that are employed within Doors, in the drawing up of Writings and Conveyances; nor of thoſe greater Numbers that palliate their want of Buſineſs with a Pretence to ſuch Chamber-practice.

If, in the third place, we look into the Profeſſion of Phyſick, we ſhall find a moſt formidable Body of Men: The Sight of them is enough to make a Man ſerious, for we may lay it down as a Maxim, that When a Nation abounds in Phyſicians it grows thin of People. Sir *William Temple* is very much puzzled to find out a Reaſon why the Northern Hive, as he calls it, does not ſend out ſuch

ſuch prodigious Swarms, and over-run the World with *Goths* and *Vandals*, as it did formerly; but had that Excellent Author obſerved that there were no Students in Phyſick among the Subjects of *Thor* and *Woden*, and that this Science very much flouriſhes in the North at preſent, he might have found a better Solution for this Difficulty, than any of thoſe he has made uſe of. This Body of Men, in our own Country, may be deſcribed like the *Britiſh* Army in *Cæſar*'s time: Some of them ſlay in Chariots, and ſome on Foot. If the Infantry do leſs Execution than the Charioteers, it is becauſe they cannot be carried ſo ſoon into all Quarters of the Town, and diſpatch ſo much Buſineſs in ſo ſhort a Time. Beſides this Body of Regular Troops, there are Stragglers, who without being duly liſted and enrolled, do infinite Miſchief to thoſe who are ſo unlucky as to fall into their Hands.

There are, beſides the abovementioned, innumerable Retainers to Phyſick, who, for want of other Patients, amuſe themſelves with the ſtifling of Cats in an Air Pump, cutting up Dogs alive, or impailing of Inſects upon the point of a Needle for Microſcopical Obſervations; beſides thoſe that are employed in the gathering of Weeds, and the Chaſe of Butterflies: Not to mention the Cockle-ſhell-Merchants and Spider-catchers.

When I conſider how each of theſe Profeſſions are crouded with Multitudes that ſeek their Livelihood in them, and how many Men of Merit there are in each of them, who may be rather ſaid to be of the Science, than the Profeſſion; I very much wonder at the Humour of Parents, who will not rather chuſe to place their Sons in a way of Life where an honeſt Induſtry cannot but thrive, than in Stations where the greateſt Probity, Learning and Good Senſe may miſcarry. How many Men are Country-Curates, that might have made themſelves Aldermen of *London*, by a right Improvement of a ſmaller Sum of Mony than what is uſually laid out upon a learned Education? A ſober, frugal Perſon, of ſlender Parts and a ſlow Apprehenſion, might have thrived in Trade, tho' he ſtarves upon Phyſick; as a Man would be well enough pleaſed to buy Silks of one, whom he would not venture to feel his Pulſe. *Vagellius* is careful, ſtudious and obliging, but withal a little thick-ſkull'd; he has not a ſingle Client, but might have had abundance of Cuſtomers. The Misfortune is, that Parents take a Liking to a particular Profeſſion, and therefore deſire their Sons may be of it. Whereas, in ſo great an Affair of Life, they ſhould conſider the Genius and Abilities of their Children, more than their own Inclinations.

It is the great Advantage of a trading Nation, that there are very few in it ſo dull and heavy, who may not be placed in Stations of Life which may give them an Opportunity of making their Fortunes. A well-regulated Commerce is not, like Law, Phyſick or Divinity, to be overſtocked with Hands; but, on the contrary, flouriſhes by Multitudes, and gives Employment to all its Profeſſors. Fleets of Merchantmen are ſo many Squadrons of floating Shops, that vend our Wares and Manufactures in all the Markets of the World, and find out Chapmen under both the Tropicks.


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Thomas Cooper, Curate of St. John of Wapping.
John Wilſon, Church-Warden.
Ja. Jackſon, Conſtable.

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